

REMARKS

Claims 3 – 16, 20, 24, 28 and 29 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 2 and 17 – 19, 21 – 23, 25 – 27 and 30 are canceled, wherein claims 1, 2, 17, 18, 22, 23 and 27 were previously canceled, and wherein claims 19, 21, 25, 26 and 30 are being canceled by the present amendment. Applicants are requesting reconsideration of the present application.

Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner has allowed claims 3 – 8, 12 and 14 – 16, and indicated that claims 19, 20 and 24 contain allowable subject matter.

In section 10 of the Office Action, claims 20 and 24 are objected to because of an informality. Applicants are amending claim 20 as suggested by the Examiner. Claim 24 depends from claim 20, and as such, the amendment to claim 20 addresses the objection to claim 24. Applicants respectfully request a withdrawal of the objection to claims 20 and 24.

In view of the amendment to claim 20, Applicants believe that claims 20 and 24 are now in condition for allowance.

In sections 2 – 4 of the Office Action, claims 21, 25, 26 and 28 are objected to. Applicants are canceling claims 21, 25, 26 and 28, thus rendering moot the rejection thereof. A withdrawal of the objection to claims 21, 25, 26 and 28 is respectfully solicited.

In section 6 of the Office Action, claims 9 – 11, 13 and 28 – 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b). Applicants are rewriting claim 9 to include an allowable recital that was previously presented in claim 19, thus placing claim 9 in condition for allowance. Claims 10, 11, 13, 28 and 29 depend from claim 9. As such, claims 10, 11, 13, 28 and 29 are now also in condition for allowance. Claim 30 is canceled, thus rendering moot the rejection thereof. Applicants are requesting reconsideration and a withdrawal of the section 102(b) rejection of claims 9 – 11, 13 and 28 – 30.

In section 7 of the Office Action, claims 21, 25 and 26 are rejected. Applicants are canceling claims 21, 25 and 26, thus rendering moot the rejection thereof. A withdrawal of the rejection of claims 21, 25 and 26 is requested.

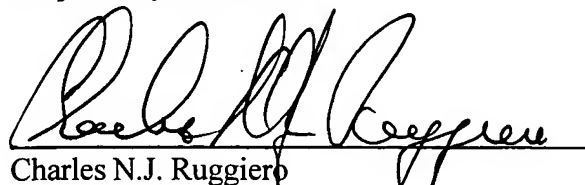
As mentioned above, Applicants are amending claim 20 to correct an informality, and rewriting claim 9 to include a recital that was previously presented in claim 19. Applicants are also amending claim 3 to correct a typographical error. None of the amendments is intended to narrow the scope of any term of any claim. Therefore, the doctrine of equivalents should be available for all of the terms of all of the claims.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe that all of the pending claims are now either allowed or allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and that this application be passed to allowance.

Since this amendment neither raises new issues nor requires further consideration, entry is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner deems that the present amendment does not place the application in condition for allowance, Applicants respectfully request that it be entered for the purpose of appeal.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date


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